



# **FEMALE LEADERSHIP: THE NEW MODEL OF LEADER**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Inequality between men and women is very present currently and especially in the working environment as there are significant differences between men's and women's working conditions such as the gender pay gap. Moreover, the difference in labour participation between men and women must be highlighted since, as can be seen in the International Labour Organisation for the year 2018, in Spain we found a labour force participation rate of 63.7% for men versus 52.4% for women.

Over the years, the inclusion of women in the labour and business market has increased, and this entails a great innovation for companies. On the other hand, another innovative influence that we find in the organizational structures currently is the implementation of the leadership style in the companies (Jung, et al., 2003) and that is why many organizations over time put aside authoritarian management and they become focused in a style based on leadership to implement in their companies.

Despite the implementation of leadership in companies and the increase in the women's participation in the workplaces, there are still few companies that have a female leadership style in their companies and above all, there are few companies that have women in the top positions of the organization because the most of Spanish companies are led or managed by men. That is why with this final degree work is wanted study the female leadership style, its characteristics and the advantages that this style can provide to the company.

Therefore, with this the objective is make visible the importance and the capacity that the female gender has in the workplace and especially at high levels of the company, as well as, the study is also carried out in order to achieve gender equality in the labour market and to be able to avoid deviations in wages and in opportunities between men and women.

In order to carry out this study we will be based on the development of three main and fundamental aspects. Firstly, there will be an extensive study about the leadership, where we will know in more detail about what this style is based on and the characteristics that it has. In addition, we will made an analysis of the main differences

between leadership and management style thus making known the new skills of currently leaders and of the different styles that we can find in the 21st century.

Secondly, it will be studied the key issue of work, female leadership, and for this, a study will be carried out on the evolution of women in the world of work, the characteristics of this style and the advantages that they bring to the company. In this point, also will be analysed the problems faced by women at work and especially when they comes to getting a promotion in their job. Therefore, will be analysed what is being done in markets and in companies to address gender inequality and the gaps faced by women.

To conclude the project, we will do a study about three Spanish companies that apply the female leadership and with that, will be analysed the plans and the equality policies used by these companies. Therefore, in order to carry out the work and analysis on the aspects mentioned, we will make use of the books, articles and documents obtained through the virtual library of the Universitat Jaume I and we will also make use of search engines such as google academic.

## **2. LEADERSHIP**

### **2.1 What is leadership?**

Nowadays, companies are facing changes and evolutions both in the organizations and in their environments since there are a number of factors such as technology, market liberalization, labour flexibility, etc. (Ahumada, 2004) that cause uncertainties in the organizations and causing constant changes in the companies.

To these changes has been added the implementation of leadership being this change one of the biggest and one of the most important. With this implementation, the existence of the authoritarian management in the hierarchical structures of the companies is left aside, constituting this, a fundamental phenomenon in the evolution of the human society and consequently in the development and durability of the social organizations (Ramírez, 2013). So, when we talk about leadership, we talk about the *“behavioural process that try to influence individuals and to the groups to achieve specific goals”* (Alves, 2000).

So, in addition to talking about leadership as an aspect that facilitates process to achieve objectives and organizational goals, it also provides direction in the company by implementing standard behaviors in employees, guiding them to perceive the organizational climate of the company (Uribe et al., 2010), in addition to providing employees motivation in their workplaces and a continuous learning.

Leadership and motivation are two elements that are closely linked in a organization since human behavior is a motivated behavior because the actions carried out by employees always have some reason or motive, motive being anything that drives the employee to act in a certain way at a certain time. Thus, motivation is defined as the force that activates the employee's behaviour and directs him or her to carry out the action (Iborra et al., 2014).

Therefore, motivation is a fundamental element in leadership because the leader is the one who leads a group of people in a certain direction by non-coercive means and who inspires and commits the team to the achievement of the visión (Geli, 2011).

That's why if the team members feel motivated in the company, they will voluntarily follow the leader to achieve the set objectives.

Consequently, it should be noted that the organizational climate and leadership are two concepts that are closely related within the company because the management skills that characterize an effective leader are closely linked to the organizational climate and are different from an authoritarian manager. In addition, also it should be noted that this concept is also closely linked to obtaining a competitive advantage over the competition thus leading the company to be able to sustain itself in the changing market that it faces.

Wherefore, that the company obtains a competitive advantage in the sector refers to the fact that it develops certain characteristics, has resources or specialised skills compared with the rest of competitors or simply that it has an innovative organizational culture among other concepts and therefore makes that customers perceive the company as unique.

In order to achieve that advantage over the competition, the company must have effective leadership that communicates at all times what it aims to achieve and has to

generate in the team the necessary capacity for change to deal with the new developments that the company has to face encouraging participation of employees in order to achieve effective results (Capa et al., 2018).

To sum up, it should be noted that effective leadership is linked with obtaining a competitive advantage in the company achieving this management style by adopting behaviors and attitudes such as self-control, the trust that they place in others and especially the confidence with themselves, the help that is conveyed to all members of the company, flexibility, adaptation to the different situations, the willingness to take risks, assertiveness, empathy and above all, the communication, being this a key factor (Alves, 2000).

## **2.2 Differences between leadership and management**

In companies we find big differences between them but one of the main differences that must be highlighted is the one between their management processes and their leadership forms. Management is focused on results, controlling and monitoring, in contrast, the leadership focuses its attention on the people of the team, on join achievement of the objectives and also focuses on training and advising to the members of the group.

Therefore, first of all, the **management** is the highest hierarchical position with the greatest formal power that administrate and directs the whole organization having this position a legitimate responsibility in the company. This style focuses on the achievement of objective without taking people into account, that is, it is based on directing its subordinates towards achieving concrete results with a short-term vision and focusing on “how” and “when” to achieve what is established and leaving out the possible changes for the company or the innovations (Geli, 2011).

With regard to management skills, according to different authors (e.g., Katz, 2009; Iborra et al., 2014) they proposed three different types of skills as are the technical, interpersonal and conceptual ones. Firstly, *conceptual management skills* are those capacities that the manager has to develop abstract thoughts in order to achieve the organization as a whole and its relationship with the environment. This type of skill is the most relevant for the higher hierarchical positions (Iborra et al., 2014).

Secondly, it should be highlighted that the *interpersonal skill* is relevant at all management levels and not simply at senior management level. This skill is characterized by the ability to communicate with the employees and have the ability to coordinate all employees providing solutions for the possible confrontations between people and so on, be able to solve them.

Finally, *technical skills* are the least relevant to senior management but are also employed by them. These skills are based on the knowledge of the high positions in the company about the management on the tools that the company can count on such as, knowing to interpret a balance sheet, knowing how to analyse production programming methods...

In spite of having management skills such as mentioned before or like empathy, decision making, the ability to delegate, the ability to solve problems... the high hierarchy also has the performance of a large number of different functions in the workplace and this is why such functions have a reduced duration of realization in order to be able to face all the tasks that are planned and to be able to achieve successfully the objectives established in the company, so that is why its perspective is short-term.

Therefore within the many functions that a manager has it should be highlighted that there are three main functions in his position such as planning, organization and control of the company (Iborra et al., 2014). Firstly, *planning* is based on developing and establishing those actions that the company wants to do to achieve the objectives set in the future, how it will be carried out and what resources it will use for that purpose. It should also be added that this planning is based on the high hierarchy plans, that is, on the corporate plans.

On the other hand, through the function of *organization*, the organizational structure of the company is designed to achieve the objectives. So, to finish with the three main functions, it should be noted that with *control*, the company's activities are monitored in order to check that company's behaviour and planned actions remain within the set limits, and if this is not the case, the management is responsible for taking corrective measures in order to achieve successfully the objectives (Iborra et al., 2014).



Wherefore, when you talk about management, you are talking about a formal style of authority, focused on the administrative management of the company and take on the responsibilities of the company, and seeks the compliance and the obedience by their subordinates to direct them towards the achievement of the objectives established and achieve this objectives successfully effectively and efficiently, focusing on how to achieve such goals and on the focus of this goals regardless of a horizontal view of them (Geli, 2011).

In contrast, **leadership** is a type of influence which is intended that the members of an organization are expected to contribute to the achievement of company's objectives. In order to achieve this, the leader influences and guides the members of the team in the activities, opinions or actions that will be carried out. In addition, it should be noted that the leaders shows charismatic and/or expert power, not necessarily being endowed with formal authority (Iborra et al., 2007).

Also, it should be noted that within the different leadership styles, we can differentiate leadership styles with a greater or lesser degree of authority. Authoritarian leadership is based on a dominant style by the leader and forces employees to behave in a certain way in different situations as well as making decision without involving team members.

On the other hand, non-authoritarian leadership is what we are going to study during the development of this work since this style is based on influencing through his charisma, his knowledge, his empathy... Moreover, it should be noted that this style does not focus on imposing obligation on others as it seeks to ensure that they act voluntary and they are motivated in carrying out the activities.

Therefore when we talk about non-authoritarian leadership, we are talking about an innovative and developmental style, focused mainly on people and with the relationship with them, taking care of the trust created in the team and achieving continuously be a reference for each one of the people in the team. Furthermore it should be noted that leadership also focuses on the joint achievement of desired results.

It should also be noted that this style is focuses on a long-term perspective and refers to an approach to change focusing on the “what” of the things and of the “why” of these always looking for the meaning of the same and showing an horizontal vision of the

objectives at all times which entails having a extensive vision of what is to be achieved managing to have more points of view and more information to obtain the desired result since it does not only focus on the focal point of the objective as is the case of authoritarian management.

Focusing on changes and not losing sight of trusting relationships with the team is one of the main characteristics of the leadership style as discussed above, as it allows employees to act voluntarily will make them more committed with the company and feel more integrated. That is why if this relationship is supported and improved, the members of the company will have greater confidence, enthusiasm, passion, motivation, greater commitment, initiative to carry out tasks voluntarily...

Thus, the leadership style is based on influencing and guiding team members, achieving that the employees become their followers and that they act freely and voluntarily in carrying out the actions that are to be achieved and not being subordinated as in the case of authoritarian management.

As noted in the case of the management, to get to be a good leader in the company Geli (2011) notes that leaders also have three types of basics skills different from the previous case. Firstly it must have the *ability to be able to solve the complex problems* that appears in the company.

To be able to solve such problems, a good leader has to be able to *build the appropriate solutions* to deal with the complex and different situations, so the leader focuses on the research to be able to get the right answer and lastly, also must be able to have the *skill of social judgment* as this will lead to greater knowledge about team members.

To achieve this skills it is necessary that the leader has complex social skills and skills about decisions making rather than being based on skills like persuasion and negotiation because this will provide to the leader a enough level of commitment with the team people that the leader is working with, as well as a better understanding of their abilities, needs, desires and beliefs and that will help them to achieve the desired objectives or the vision they want to achieve together (Geli, 2011).

The causes that lead a person to become a leader are very diverse but according with authors like (eg., Iborra et al., 2007) it should be highlighted three leadership theories which explain the different causes leading to this transformation. First of all, *the great man theory or feature approach*, this theory aims to determine the common characteristics and personality traits of different leaders in companies. Therefore, with this it is wanted carry out studies to identify such aspects and determine a psychological profile common to all of them.

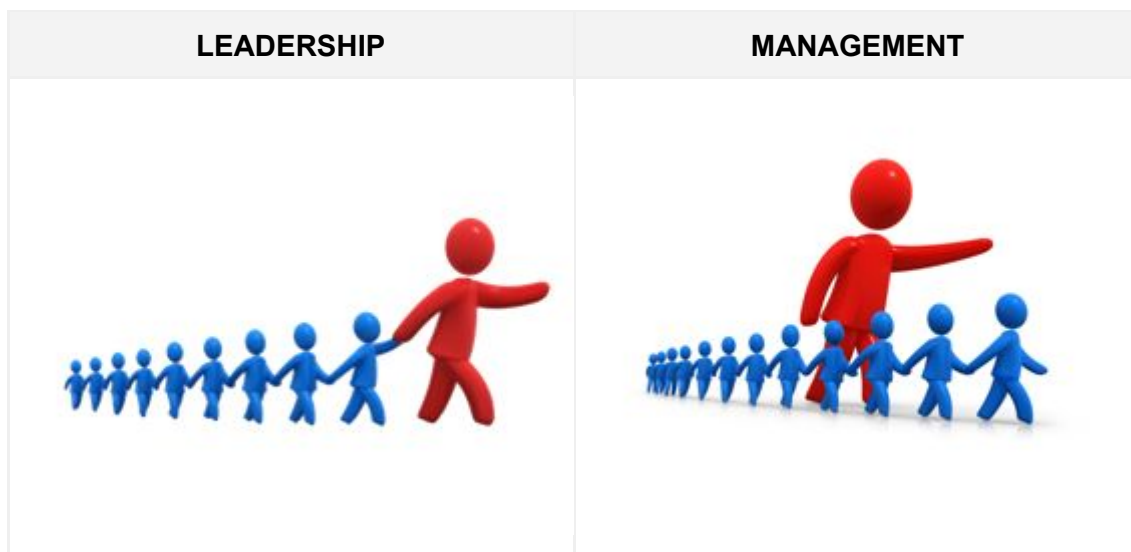
In second place, there are *the environmental theories* which refer to the fact that a leader answers to a specific situation and not to a characteristic as commented in the previous case, that is, for each of the situations that need to be faced, it will be choosed one leader or another. And to finish with such theories, in third and last place, we find the *contingent theories*, in this theory it should be highlighted that the leadership will first depend de personality traits like internal motivation, social maturity, the aptitude for human relations and the ability to communicate, and secondly, it will depends of the power and control that the leaders have over the different situations that they face (Iborra et al., 2007).

To conclude it should be highlighted that the leadership is a style that can be found at any level and position in the company. Is a style based on innovation, communication and in the confidence with the members of the team, moreover, the leadership is always trying to motivate and integrate employees. That is why the leadership influences followers to do things voluntarily and jointly in order to achieve the objectives set in the company and they feel motivated at all times to successfully achieve the goals and always as a united team.

And as Phil Jackson said: “ *Good teams become great teams when their members trust each other enough to give up the I for the We*”.

Below you can seen in a more graphic way, the main differences between management and leadership:

**Illustration 1.** Leadership vs Chief



**Source:** self-production.

**Table 1.** Differences between a leader and a chief

LEADER	CHIEF
- Innoayes	- Manage
- Develops	- Keep
- Focuses on people	- Focuses on administrative management
- Transmits confidence	- Control
- Long-term perspective	- Short-term perspective
- What, Why	- How, When
- More extensive view of the objective (horizontal view)	- Vision focused on the objective
- Is a reference	- Formal power
- Followers	- Subordinates

**Source:** self-production.

### **2.3 The new skills of actual leaders**

Nowadays we are facing a period of constant changes like, economic, social, political, technological changes... causing this constant modifications and adaptations in society and above all in the organizations because these have to be adapted at all times to the new changes that they have to face in order to stay in the market.

For this reason, the companies in the 21st century need efficient and effective leaders to be able to lead the organization with the new and complex global realities as well as prepare it for these new changes and know how to adapt to the situations because as Arnold H. Glasow said “ *One of the tests of leadership is the ability to recognize a problem before it becomes an emergency*”.

So, these changing times, leaders must be able to face up to situations that involve constant changes such as globalization, technology, innovation, the environment, social responsibility... as these situations have caused everything to progress and change and especially the way to guide business.

A clear example of these advances are the technological ones, causing in the companies a greater satisfaction of the work due to the greater comfort at time to do the activities in the company and therefore an increase of the production and with it an increase of the employment. In addition, it should be highlighted that if the company achieve have a high management of technology it will achieve a global competition which will be an advantage for the company.

In this way, in order to face up the different situations in the current environment, leaders must know how to adapt to the different markets that the company may face, as well as being committed to and supporting the implementation of strategies in the organization in order to achieve all those objectives that are set. Moreover, the leaders must be committed with the environment and they must have the knowledge to guide the company in case that it has some kind of social responsibility (Salem, 2012).

With all of these changes that are taking place in the actuality there are also changes in the selection of leaders, because times ago, companies were based only on the knowledge that they had purchased during their training and on their technical capacity

as specialist in an area, but in the actuality, leadership is also linked with the theory of the multiple intelligences.

This theory defines intelligence as the ability that have the people to solve problems or for produce products that bring value to a specific cultural context or in any community context and that is why in the organizations of the 21st century have leaders who are characterized by their interpersonal, intrapersonal and emotional intelligence, among others, is important.

With these three types of intelligence, leaders can equip themselves with their own internal knowledge that will make it easier for them understand better their internal needs and thus be able to deal with different tasks in a effective way. In addition, these intelligences also provide people skills to understand and work with others which is a first necessity in leaders as their mandate is based on teamwork. Finally, it should be noted that with emotional intelligence, leaders will be able to control their feelings and interpret and relate efficiently with the feelings of others (Iborra et al., 2007).

So, when we talk about the skills of the current leaders, it should be noted their ability to anticipate to the problems that may appear in the organization due to the changing environment that they face as well they must be able to manage the appropriate changes. On the other hand, leaders must be oriented to people and to their quality life and be committed with the organization and with their followers (Gómez et al., 2018).

That is why effective and efficient leadership needs to develop and support a set of competencies and skills such as communication skills, motivation towards their followers, respect, sensitivity and flexibility in the adaptation to different situations, innovation and creativity in their workplace in addition the leader also has to know to lead the changes, work in a team and know and do the right thing at all times.

With this, it must be concluded that the skills of the current leaders are essentials to cope to the new situations that we are facing, being of vital importance communication skills inside and outside the organization, empathy among team members, trust, cooperation, emotional control... and it should be highlighted that these capacities are the foundation of female leadership.

### **3. FEMALE LEADERSHIP**

#### **3.1 The evolution of women in the world of work**

In the past, society has separated into two types of families, on one hand, the families who had money and on the other, those who had resort to any kind of work in order to obtain an income to get food for their families. Many of these families who had to look for work often found it in the countryside taking care of the land and obtaining from these products as well as they took care of the animals in order to obtain food such as milk or products such as wool in the case of sheeps and these products later were sold in order to get an income for their families.

It should be highlighted that farming for many families was a job for both, men and women as in many cases women had to combine domestic and agricultural work in order to contribute money to their homes despite that this fact of women and their work in the countryside was not very common at the beginning. Although in different cases, many married women with children were forced by their husbands to be at home taking care of their families without being able to obtain a stable job as they were also limited by the labour rights that they had with respect to men.

Therefore, it should be highlighted that throughout the ages, women have had and still have a very important role in the world of work, even if it is not recognised in society as it should be. Women from a very young age have been taught to follow their mother's actions with housework generation after generation as many of them were mainly engaged in domestic work like cooking, cleaning, childcare... and it was men who did the agricultural and agro-industrial work (Mack et al., 1982).

The dedication that the women had with the domestic tasks, were not well accepted in the society since the tasks that these carried out were considered as a null or invisible work socially, economic and politically. The consequence of this was the negation of work that most of the women carried out as a main activity in their daily lives taking care of their families as well as doing the tasks of their homes (Torns, 1995).

So, in the society only was considered female employees those who received a salary, even if it was unstable or minimal, and this in society was very rare as it was unusually see women in paid work due to their full dedication to the home tasks.

From the 1920s onwards, more and more women were getting paid to work in other homes, this is it, many of the women became domestic workers getting with this an income by cooking for other families or make them the tasks of the home in return for a salary. With the new changes, girls also began to get a schooling and many of them had to combined school with the help in their own homes (Mack et al., 1982).

Thus, one of the most relevant modifications of the social social organization was the extra-domestic work on women and this work became a common experience for most of them besides representing a fundamental step towards emancipation (Borderías et al., 1994).

With these advances, it should be noted that all these aspects and negation towards women were improving over the years because society was also advancing and with this the infrastructures, with an increasing number of women that had some studies due to their schooling in schools and even universities.

These aspects were difficult at the beginnings because few places had a school and many families did not have transport to get there or did not even have enough money to pay higher education or the payment of a second residence where they can stay during that period in the case of university studies (Mack et al., 1982).

From the 1980s onwards and following with the evolution there was a strong growth in Spanish female employment where working class women worked in both, at home and in factories for example of toys and shoes in the case of the women of Valencia (Torns, 1995) taking this to a settlement in society and an improvement in family income as well as to a change in family roles (Borderías et al., 1994).

Therefore, the evolution of women in the world of work and the increase of them in the participation in the market has increased positively, although, occupational segregation continues to be an essential feature in the labour market and this also produces a



strong concentration of female labour in the submerged employment and in particular in the service sector where they perform unqualified occupations.

Consequently, the importance of the training that women have with their studies must be highlighted, since this assure a greater and better occupation in the market and it is also necessary to continue to focus on training to take new job prospects as well as to promote the development of new skills and personal competences (Gil, 2006).

Even so, it should be noted that female employment is concentrated in a very small group of occupational areas and despite the evolution of these in the labour market, the female gender has always been concentrated in the lowest positions in the company leading this to lower remuneration also compared with men (Padilla, 2002).

In this way, despite such developments, women still have to fight on day after day with the problems that they found in their workplaces. Despite the positive evolutions in the world of work, there is still a long way to go and many goals to achieve among which should be highlighted, the achievement of equal pay between men and women, as well as, the ability to find women in the higher positions in companies, because this aspect is not common in the workplace.

### **3.2 Skills of female leadership**

As we have seen, in history there have been great evolutions and changes in the business world and that is why we are going to base this project on two important advances that lead us to one of the new models of leadership in the actuality, this is, female leadership.

This style have improved by the advancement of women in the business world and the change in management style of many companies which have left away the authoritarian management style and have gone to focus on the different types of leadership to deal with the company which have also evolved over the years and have given way to new and more contemporary styles like the spiritual leadership, the participative, the transformational, the charismatic, the female leadership...

These styles are characterized by being motivational styles, inspiring, centred on the people, based on empathy and shared values among team members. It should also be

noted that all of them are focus on the different views of the employees, achieving with this a joint decision making by all the group and above all they take into account the feelings and emotions of people (Lloria, 2017).

Therefore, the progress and the evolution of society has given way to a transformation in the families and a gradual start of women in the business world which has caused a change in the patterns of society giving way, as mentioned before, to new styles of leadership among other aspects. That is way, with the female leadership style is intended to link the society with the idea that women do not have to choose between work and family (Pulido, 2014).

Traditionally, the highest hierarchical levels of the company have always been linked and considerate of men and that is why over time, the new management style, leadership, has also been considered a male style. It should be highlighted that this is not true because currently with all the evolutions and with the most modern visions, the qualities concerning to the new styles of leadership and in particular, to the female leadership, come close to the stereotype of the female gender considering with this that women are intuitive, emotional, spontaneous, educator, cooperator, loyal, defender, follower... (Puyal, Sanagustin, 2006).

It has been demonstrated that the female gender has its own characteristics that distinguish them from men, which is why women have a different way of carrying out management tasks from the male gender (Doña, 2004). These characteristics are natural skills of women and are considered "*innate abilities*". These abilities include verbal skills, different types of facial expressions, gestures, emotional sensitivity and empathy, the ability to make long-term plans, cooperation, communication, the sensitivity in dealing with different issues...

Therefore, these innate abilities that the female gender have, would be a fundamental aspecto to face the new situations of the 21st century and with this the new styles of leadership like the female one, where the communication and the handling of the information are very importance, as well as the relations between the different people and the relation between the different egalitarian work teams bringing all this to a positive effect to cope with an appropriate time management and success of any situation (Pulido, 2014).

So, when we talk about female leadership, we are talking to a current, modern, integrative and cooperative style of leadership and that it meets the requirements of the organizations of the 21st century (Puyal, Sanagustin, 2006). This style is focused towards interpersonal relationships, multiple decisions making (Contreras et al., 2012) and it adapts to the innate capabilities of female gender leading these to be able to achieve the success of the organization.

That will be possible because women are characterized by having a contextual vision about the aspects to be dealt with, that is, they have an horizontal vision about what they want to achieve and they have a greater negotiation power (Pulido, 2014). This will provide to the organization an open, inclusive and collaborative compromise with the team members since it supposes an interest towards the different points of view that are contributed and with this achieve better decision making in a more informed way.

In this way, when we talk about the characteristics of female leadership, we are talking about characteristics associated with a leadership that adapts to the need of the 21st century because as mentioned in previous points, leaders in general, and especially at present, have a broader and longer-term vision of what they want to achieve and are more flexible when it comes to adapting to the different situations that they have to face due to the complex environment.

So, with the horizontal vision of the objectives, they manage to obtain diverse points of view to reach those results that they want, achieving at the same time, a work in team in which the members participate and cooperate, and also, feel integrated in the decision making and in the company to which they belong.

On the other hand, it should be highlighted another aspect that characterizes the current leadership, and above all the female one, and is for the emotional involvement towards people, achieving with this greater fellowship, greater motivation for all and a higher degree of trust. To achieve all this, we must not forget the ability to communicate because it is a very important factor in the new style and of course, is a key aspect for the good performance of the organization giving way to get better results and better solutions.

**Table 2.** Similarities between the current leader and the female leader

FEMALE LEADERSHIP	21ST CENTURY LEADERSHIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flexibility</li> <li>- High level of communication</li> <li>- Work in team</li> <li>- Search long-term consensus</li> <li>- Cooperation</li> <li>- Affective, sensitive and emotional</li> <li>- Horizontal view</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication</li> <li>- Flexibility</li> <li>- Work in team</li> <li>- Horizontal view</li> <li>- Long-term vision</li> <li>- Cooperation</li> <li>- Emotional intelligence</li> </ul>

**Source:** self-production.

To conclude, as mentioned above, in the last decades the inclusion of women in the business world has increased fast and positively, but their access to the highest positions in the company is slower. Another impediment that they have to face is to a serie of limitations in their workplaces, and which is why, over time has been achieved that the rights between men and women are equal. In additions, among these problems, it has been established that hierarchical positions in a company are linked with men but with the female leadership, it is demonstrated that women are able to achieving an effective management in the company (Contreras et al., 2012).

In view of this, it should be highlighted that women are full qualified to deal with any type of management because their innate abilities adjust positively to new styles and in particular to style of female leadership. These capacities promote that the work that is carried ou is developed in a more natural and closer way in the company and with it is achieved a greater commitment with the team. In addition, it promote in the organization a joint work between the members of the company in a more effective and efficient way because this style is characterized by the efficiency in the creation of work groups and in their high capacity to take decisions in moments of uncertainty.

### **3.3 Advantages**

As mentioned in previous points and as noted Iriarte (2010), “ *female leadership brings a large number of advantages to the company as there are a number of features that characterize them with respect to men and that affect the operation of the company in a positive way*”. These features are:

- More receptive and participative attitude
- More multidirectional and multidimensional leadership
- They are more creative in their suggestions for leadership
- Women are more communicative and open with personal relationships
- They develop cooperation and participation policies
- They are available to change in any situation
- Uses coercion as a last resort
- They have a greater attention to feelings and to the use of emotional intelligence. That is, they are more sensitive to the emotions and personal situations of others.
- They carry out a more democratic, dialogic, pedagogic, mediation style...

Therefore, for organizations it is positively bet on a female leadership style because this provides a lot of advantages for the company like a better negotiation, recognize the successes of others more easily, among others, and then we will talk with a more detail about some of the advantages.

Firstly, it should be noted that through a study carried out by professors from the Business School at Columbia University and Maryland in 2008, was analysed the relationship between the 1.500 largest companies in the United States and whether or not they had women in management positions (Morales, 2008). With this study was found that companies with women in the positions of the high hierarchy obtain better economic results, so it can be established that the first advantage that female leadership brings are economic benefits for the company.

The presence of women in the companies was a rare image because they they were only engaged with the housework and taking care of their families. This fact has progressed positively over time because there are more and more women who have an

employment and society is more involved in achieving equality between men and women. So, having the presence of women in the company above all in management positions improves the image of the company because as has been mentioned, the issue of equality is currently a very important issue in the society.

Have women in the top positions of the company shows to the competition and to the society that the company bet for women and for not discriminating them before the male gender. In addition as mentioned above, women will bring innovation to the company, thus contributing to an adaptation of the organization's image to the changing needs of the market, and will also show, the company's commitment with the acceptance of social responsibilities.

Women have maternal instincts and bring a variety of perspectives such as life experiences and problem-solving skills (Gil Adi, 2004). It is for this reason that the female gender is closer to people, is concerned about the feelings and moods of others achieving with this create a family atmosphere in the management and in the collaboration of the company.

Furthermore, it should be noted that when we talk about multidirectional and multidimensional leadership the development of collective attitudes and values is favoured, which provides cohesion and positive links between the members of the team, achieving with this a greater employee motivation (Iriarte, 2010). This motivation and this union between people will make that the company achieve a higher level of teamwork and a better result.

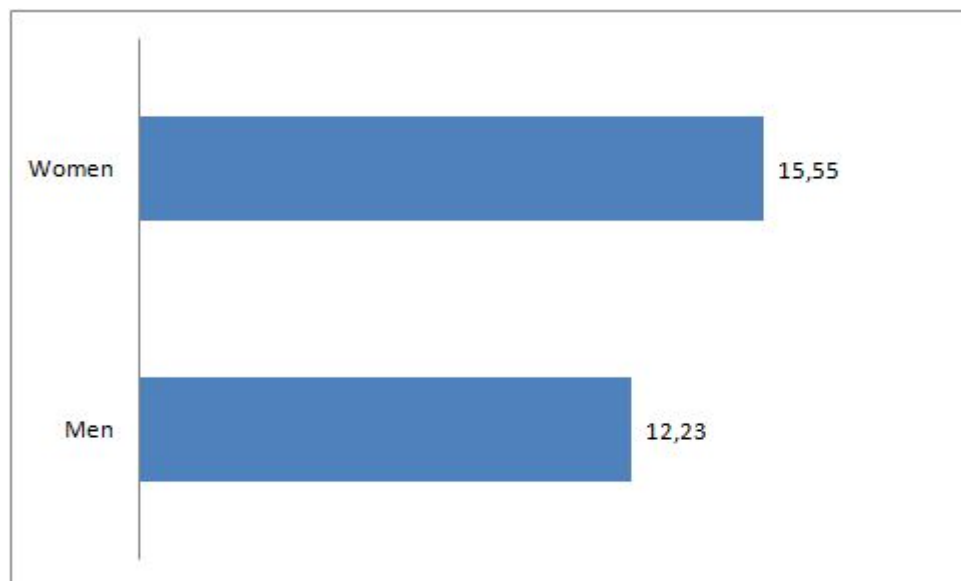
Another advantage that female leadership brings to the company is the ability of conciliation between work life and family life. There are many women who every day have to conciliate the care of their families with their work. This capacity of conciliations is beneficial for the company because women provide greater support to people and contribute to greater organization and a better use of the time spent on each task, achieving with this carry out the activities in a more efficient way (Chillida, Guerra, 2008).

### **3.4 Problems that women face today**

As we have seen in previous points, each time more and more women are in the laboural world, but they still have to deal with a number of gender inequalities in their jobs every day, as well as they also have to face to some obstacles that prevent them moving forward in their work. It should be highlighted that over time, the obstacles that they have to face are not as strong as before but they are still a big challenge. Moreover, another challenge for women is achieve a high position in the company because this is rare nowadays.

So, as can be seen in the National Institute of Statistics (INE), women face a clear inequality of opportunities respect to men when they try to enter to the business world, since in Spain, in the last quarter of 2019, it can be see an unemployment rate of 15.55% for women with regard to 12.23% for men, which lead us to a clear gender inequality.

**Graphic 1.** Unemployment rate among men and women for the last quarter of 2019



**Source:** self-production based on data of the National Institute of Statistics ([www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es), 19/04/2020).

From the previous graph, it can be considered that women have a higher rate of unemployment than men, in addition to this, the female gender has less participation in the labour market. Moreover, to this disadvantage of gender inequality and of discrimination against women in the labour market, there are others professional

obstacles that women have to face at work like, wage discrimination, sexual harassment, difficulty in promotion to access a higher positions, difficulty for accessing to certain professional fields....(Torns, 1995).

When we talk about professional obstacles, we are talking about “*events or conditions, both internal to the person and their environment, that makes difficult to women advance professionally*” (Padilla, 2002). These impediments can be classified into two groups:

→ The impediments before enter into the labor world. As mentioned above, women are increasing their presence in the labor world, but it should be highlighted that the greater presence of female gender in a determined professional field is linked to a notable isolation of women in lower positions, with less prestige and less social and economic recognition (Cacouault, 1997).

A clear example of this would be the big presence of women in the health sector, currently there are many women working in this sector but few of them occupy high positions. Most of them are limited to the presence in auxiliary and nursing positions, that is, they are limited to care and support positions, which is closely linked to the presence of women in the care of their families.

In many cases, many of the women who have aspired to enter jobs that are not traditionally accepted as feminine, they have gotten a sense of rejection, that is, they have perceived difficulties such as the negation of their friends and families, as well as they also have been forced to work long hours, have been discriminated and even, in some cases they have been sexually harassed (Padilla, 2002).

→ The impediments after enter into the labor world. This impediments are characterised for affect to the professional development of women once they are integrated into the business world. Moreover, this impediments are also linked with selection, recruitment, promotion and with the economic compensation (Padilla, 2002).

When it comes to selection and recruitment, women are discriminated against as they are regarded as the principal responsables for their families, for the care of the children and for carrying out the tasks of home and the work takes a back seat (Fitzgerald and



Weitzman, 1992). This discrimination is therefore associated with the possibility of women becoming pregnant and that they have to temporarily leave the company which often ends up with a lay off of the women by the company.

In many cases, companies do not make it easy linking job with family care and work at home and in many occasions this leads to women being overloaded with tasks that they can not cope with, and which ends up being negative for both professional and personal development. As a result of this and also of the other impediments that women face, they choose to leave the company and get their working life back on track by opening their own business.

Consequently, apart from the impediments discussed above, one of the main limitation that women have to face is the vertical mobility. This aspect is called "*The glass ceiling*", which refers to the invisible impediment that prevents that women with high qualifications advance further into higher positions. In other words, this ceiling prevents women from accessing and promoting themselves in the highest positions.

As documented by the work of authors such as (Fitzgerald and Weitzman, 1992) women are discriminated against when they try to access to higher positions of management due to different issues such as:

- Bosses or subordinates assign them fewer challenges to perform and give them fewer opportunities and capabilities to make decisions.
- Women achieve fewer authority and command capacity because they receive less feedback in carrying out their work, which prevents them from making a quickly progress, and it should also be highlighted that supervisors do not take women seriously.
- Lack of flexibility is another of the issues to be highlight as the higher positions in the company needs lot of hours of dedication at work and, as mentioned above, many women have to deal at the same time with the laboral and family life and with home tasks.
- Finally, the lack of opportunities that women have to access to privileged information of the company because when it is going to be communicated in the company, they are not informed.

On the other hand, we found that many companies are guided by the woman's physique, in many cases they are contracted for their appearance and their physique to work in positions such as secretary or stewardess where they have to show a good image towards the customers (Fitzgerald and Betz, 1983). In addition, it should be highlighted that women have lower salary expectations since in most of the cases, women receive a lower wage reward than men in jobs with the same conditions, and that is why this fact would be another impediment facing the female gender.

**Graphic 2.** Salary gap between men and women in Spain in 2017



**Source:** self-production based on data of the National Institute of Statistics ([www.ine.es](http://www.ine.es) , 19/04/2020).

In conclusion, it has been observed that women have to face different obstacles to be able to achieve a position in the business world and in order to achieve high positions in the company. Women are discriminated against in their jobs with respect to men because they get less remuneration, have fewer job opportunities, perform their tasks under unequal conditions with respect to the male gender, are not valued as they should be... For these reasons, it is necessary search solutions in order to achieve an equality between men and women in the labour market and also achieve that women moves upwards in the highest positions of the company and prevent them from only doing the tasks of lower levels.

### **3.5 Measures to address the situation faced by women**

Currently, a greater presence of the female gender can be observed in the labour market but still, it should be noted that women even in the 21st century have to face obstacles that prevent them advance professionally, and this obstacles also do that women stay in unequal conditions on work with respect to men. Therefore, to end with this situation and achieve an equality between men and women both in business and socially it is necessary establish some measures to be able to cope with it and achieve a significant change in the mind of both business and society.

According to (Padilla, 2002), it can be considered three essential measures to end with the inequality and with employment discrimination and this are, personal measures, educational measures and political and social measures. It should be highlighted that these three measures are associated with the attitudes that people have so, it is necessary contribute to achieve a change in attitudes, which will make it easier the adaptation of education to the needs that women have. That is, society has been educated in male terms because the man has always been seen as the one who brings money into house and the one who works, and consequently, woman has been seen as the one who makes the home tasks and the one who care of family.

Therefore, it is necessary to educate and teach in equality so that the female gender can have the same labor and social possibilities that the men. That is why education is a very important fact for change in society, and it is necessary that the education system maximises gender equality and with this, be able to achieve a better and greater education in future members of the society to pursue a profession on an equal terms.

To these three main and essential measures, must be added to them, the gender diversity as it is considered a useful, innovative and advantageous strategy for achieving equality between women and men in the labour market, as well as being considered appropriate to be able to face the current requirements of the labour market (Barberá, 2005). Consequently, it should be highlighted that the implementation of this strategy in companies, promotes the participation of women in positions of responsibility.

The main idea of this strategy is to take the most of the potential offered by heterogenous grupos, that is, the potential offered by the groups regardless of sex, age, nationality... as the aim is to achieve variety in the company. In addition, it should be highlighted that with gender diversity, people are valued for who they are and what they can and should contribute to the company regardless of their origin or their personal characteristics.

In this way, the implementation of diversity can ensure that companies attract and retain different talents and that they be representative of both sexes as it is a mixed workforce. This strategy also makes it possible to achieve better quality in what is done, and can also help to improve the image of the company because the equal opportunity policies are an important marketing instrument and above all of social projection (Barberá, 2005).

To conclude, in order to face the obstacles that women face when they comes enter to the labour market and in their progress in the workplace, there must be a change in society, in education and in people's thinking, leaving aside the masculinized culture as humanity has to be concerned about the difficulties that women face in the workplace.

Therefore, in companies, people are to be considered as persons in their entirety, taking into account their skills, aspirations and needs regardless of gender and the companies must be based on the valuation and on respect for gender diversity. So, if all parts contribute to an improvement, it will be possible to achieve an equal society between men and women also giving to the female gender the opportunity to promote in the company without having to face any obstacles.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

To carry out the case study about companies that choose female leadership in their organizations and gender equality, firstly, we have to select a number of companies such as Enagás, BBVA and NH Hotel Group. Therefore, for the selection of these three companies, we have based on a series of gender equality rankings among which we can highlight the Gender Equality Index of Bloomberg and the Equileap Index.

In first place, for create the Equileap ranking of gender equality in companies, this company analyzes and evaluates the data published by the different companies studied. This analysis is carried out to more than 3.000 different companies from all over the world and from different sectors. This is why, that in order to evaluate the different companies, Equileap is based on 19 elements related to gender equality and also analyses the policies that companies have put in place for achieve gender equality.

Among the different elements analyzed by the company, we can find: balance at all organizational levels, equal opportunities for professional development, the conciliation between work and personal life, equal pay for both genders... And that is how, after a detailed analysis of all the aspects, Equileap creates the ranking of the best companies in gender equality.

Consequently, then we talk about the main objective of the equality ranking, we are talking about help the investors to identify the companies that lead by promoting the achievement of gender equality and with this that investors can make decisions based on non-financial elements like this.

On the other hand, The Bloomberg Equality Index is similar to the Equileap ranking, as the main objective is make a follow-up of the performance of the leading companies in the progress of women across the world and achieve with this that companies around the world make public their compromise with equality between men and women.

To carry out this Equality Index, is realized an analysis to approximately 6.000 companies from 84 different countries which are engaged to gender equality in their organizations. For do this analysis, Bloomberg focuses on the equality policies that they implement and in transparency when they have to communicate their programmes and data that are related with gender. Once analyzed, the company measures gender equality through five key points such as: female leadership and talents, the equality of salaries, gender parity, inclusive culture and sexual harassment prevention policies.

So, once the companies to be studied in more detail at work have been selected, we will carry out an investigation and a research about the equality policies and plans that these companies carry out. For it, we focus mainly on corporate websites of companies

which provide the necessary and detailed information about the equality policies that they employ and the equality plans that are carried out in each of them.

## **5. COMPANIES THAT APPLY FEMALE LEADERSHIP**

Focusing on evolution, more and more companies are deciding to have women on their teams and above all in the high positions in the company, although this is an expensive and slowly improving process. Moreover, it should also be highlighted that more and more Spanish companies such as Enagás S.A, BBVA, NH Hotel Group, Inditex, Repsol, Ferrovial... are implementing the female leadership style in their companies and are committed to gender equality as pointed out by the gender equality rankings on pages such as Bloomberg or Expansion.

The elaboration of these rankings is carried out with the analysis of a big number of companies among the different countries of the world and for this, are used different elements to be able to measure their progress and achievement towards gender equality. Among the elements to be analyzed, can find gender balance in leadership and workforce, the equality of salaries, promotion policies, among others.

So, the objective of these rankings is analyse the situation in the world of work and above all in the business world and evaluthe with this, the performance of big companies for achieving a balance between the female and the male gender in their organizations. In addition, this is intended to provide transparency to the markets about the issue of equality.

**Table 3.** Companies in the gender equality ranking created by Equileap

Position	Company	Country	Position	Company	Country
1	Diageo	Reino Unido	13	Westpac	Australia
2	Mirvac	Australia	14	National Australia Bank	Australia
3	Bank of America	EEUU	15	BHP	Australia
4	L'Oréal	Francia	16	GSK	Reino Unido
5	Telstra	Australia	17	Johnson & Johnson	EEUU
6	Stockland	Australia	18	ASX	Australia
7	Air New Zealand	Nueva Zelanda	19	Suncorp	Australia
8	DNB	Noruega	20	Transurban	Australia
9	Origin energy	Australia	48	NH Hotel Group	España
10	Medibank	Australia	49	Red Eléctrica	España
11	General Motors	EEUU	81	Enagás	España
12	Kering	Francia	83	Repsol	España

**Source:** self-production from the information of the expansion page (<https://www.expansion.com/empresas/2019/10/03/5d9508b7e5fdeac43c8b45f2.html>, 23/04/2020).

**Table 4.** Companies on the Bloomberg Gender Equality Index

2U, Inc.	Centene Corporation	Galápagos
A.P. Møller - Mærsk A/S	Citigroup, Inc.	Galp Energia SGPS S.A.
Aareal Bank AG	The Coca-Cola Company	Gap Inc.
Accenture	Coca-Cola FEMSA	General Motors
ACEA S.p.A.	Core Laboratories	Gold Fields
Adobe	Credit Suisse	The Hartford
ADP	Danone	Hera S.p.A.
Advanced Micro Devices, Inc.	DBS Ltd.	Horace Mann
ÅF Pöyry	Deutsche Börse AG	Humana Inc.
Aflac	Diageo PLC	Iberdrola
Aggreko	DKSH	Indra
AXA Group	DuPont	INDITEX
BBVA	Ecolab Inc.	ING
Bradesco	EDPR	Intuit
Banco Santander	Elisa	Jones Lang LaSalle
Bank of America	Enagás, S.A	JPMorgan Chase & Co
BMO Financial Group	Enbridge	Kering
Bankia S.A	Endesa S.A	KeyCorp
Barclays	Enel S.p.A	Kinaxis
Bayer AG	Etsy	Lenovo
BB Seguros	Evertec	L'Oréal
Box Inc.	FERROVIAL	Nestlé S.A
CAE	First Data	NH Hotel Group
CaixaBank	Ford Motor Company	SAP
CBRE	Franklin Templeton	TELEFÓNICA

**Source:** self-production from the information of the Bloomberg page  
<https://data.bloomberglp.com/company/sites/46/2020/01/2020-MemberList.pdf>, 23/04/2020).



Therefore, based on the rankings seen above, we will carry out a more detailed study about three of these companies. Firstly, we will analyse the company Enagás, a Spanish company dedicated to the transport of natural gas and to the technical management of the gas system. Secondly, we will study extensively the financial institution BBVA, and finally, we will make a study about the NH Hotel Group. Consequently, in order to carry out these studies, we will based on the policies and on the equality plans of each of the companies.

### **ENAGÁS S.A**

Enagás is a Spanish company dedicated for 50 years to the transport of natural gas and to the technical management of the gas system being also an international reference company in the development, support and operations of gas infrastructure. Consequently, it should be highlighted that Enagás has approximately 12.000 km of gas pipelines, three underground storages and four regasification plants.



Regarding to the company's mission, it is *"Develop and manage gas infrastructures in a secure, efficient and environmentally responsible manner; complying with prevailing legislation and helping guarantee supply, particularly in our role as the Technical System Manager in Spain; offering our experience, knowledge and best practices to create value for our stakeholders"*.

Moreover, as far as vision is concerned, Enagás wants to be a reference both at a national and international level in the development and management of gas infrastructures, always taking into account the values that characterize the company such as efficiency, transparency, innovation, integrity of all members of the company, sustainability, security and above all teamwork.

Besides the values of the company, Enagás have as a key for it business the promotion of work by women and this is why that this company works to achieve gender equality between men and women in this organization because, as the

CincoDías (2019) source points out, the total staff of the company is 1.449 people, of which 26.98% are women.

In order to achieve gender equality, one of the most important aspects for the company is to have a working environment based on trust and mutual respect. In addition, Enagás bet for aspects that characterize the company as diversity, integrations and recognition of individual merit. Consequently, to all this, it should be added that the company has started more than 110 measures to achieve the conciliation between professional and working life among which we can highlight, the quality of employment, the flexibility both in time and space, that is, the teleworking, the family support, and the professional development, among others.

Therefore, Enagás has built its own actions to achieve gender equality around the following points:

- *Strict implementation of the applicable legislation.* The company is committed to carry out in detail the applicable legislation in terms of equal opportunities and specifically the obligations of Organic Law 3/07 for Effective Equality between Women and Men. With this, the intention is do effective the principle of equal treatment and opportunity as well as avoid and thus prevent possible discriminatory behaviour against women.
- *Equal of opportunities and equity.* Enagás focuses on integrity, work and on achievement when it comes to selecting, hiring, developing talent, promoting, rewarding people... leaving aside aspects like race, sex, ideologies or beliefs.

To achieve this, the company must pay attention to ensure the effective equality between both genders, ensuring also, the absence of both, direct and indirect discrimination, or the reason of sex in the professional development opportunities offered to employees. Therefore, will be promoted the development of measures on issues such as remuneration models, professional evaluations, the time that employees expend working, conciliation, harassment...

- *Conciliation between work and personal life.* With this action, it is intended provide to all employees a balance and a flexible environment for that they can adapt to their needs and also that they can continue to care for and cultivate other responsibilities and interests that allow them achieve a full satisfaction in both aspects, that is, in their professional and personal lives.

To make this possible, the company must continue promoting measures and policies which are positive for the balance between the personal and professional lives of their employees and must also implement new family responsibility actions.

- *Extension of the standards of equity to the value chain.* The company considers both providers and contractors, indispensable collaborators for achieve its objectives and that is why Enagás thinks that it is important involve them in the ethical behaviours of the company. In addition, the company also feels essential that they promote the company's values and the performance standards in terms of equality in all its value chains.

Consequently, it should be highlighted that with the equality policies and plans that the company has, Enagás has achieved in the last 15 years, firstly, the Certificate of Family-Responsible Company by the foundation *Másfamilia* in 2007 due to the implementation of a Sustainable Management Model which promotes both conciliation and equal opportunities in the company.

This achievement has been benefited from the involvement of employees in the development of the projects carried out because this makes them feel like an important aspect of the company's objectives. Moreover, Enagás focused on three important and basics aspects such as, the definition and involvement of responsibilities on each level of the company, the identification of improvements through evaluation, and the design of appropriate action plans to deal with deficiencies, as well as the implementation of an Integral Management System of people and 360° evaluation.

In second place, in year 2010, Enagás was one of the first companies to have “*El distintivo de igualdad en la empresa*” delivered by the *Ministerio de Sanidad, Política e Igualdad*. And it should be highlighted that this recognition was the result of their

actions in that area. Following that, eight years later, in 2018 it was the first Spanish company to appear in the Equileap World ranking on gender equality. The inclusion of the company in the rankings, has been the result of the constant effort to the company in aspects like, the diversity and equality of opportunities.

This aspects have advanced thanks to the implementation of training, coaching and networking initiatives to promote the female talent, the increase of the participation of women in positions of responsibility or the implementation of conciliation measures such as teleworking. And finally, it should be noted the Enagás' achievement in 2019 when the company was included in the Gender Equality Index of Bloomberg.

**Graphic 3.** Enagás' equality achievements



**Source:** self-production from the information of *Cinco días el país* ([https://cincodias.elpais.com/cincodias/2019/06/26/extras/1561564649\\_204734.html](https://cincodias.elpais.com/cincodias/2019/06/26/extras/1561564649_204734.html), 24/04/2020).

## **BBVA**

It is a financial entity that started in 1857 in Bilbao, it was in 1999 when this entity was changed its name to BBVA due to the union of *Banco Bilbao*, *Banco Vizcaya* and *Argentaria*. Currently, this bank has more than 160 years of experience, being a world reference and achieving to be one of the most recognized and awarded banks.



It should be highlighted that the BBVA bank, works to achieve a better future for people, focusing on searching lasting relationships with their customers. Therefore, for achieve this, the financial institution is committed to the future, being a leader in the adaptation to the different needs imposed by the market which is becoming an increasingly global market.

This company, is a financial institution focused on its customers and that is why it works with empathy, agility and integrity. In addition, BBVA are an ambitious and innovative company in order to be always updated to the new suggestions of the market. Therefore, for BBVA and as mentioned above, people are very important to the company, so teamwork, trust and commitment are key factors to make that the employees feel involved in the decisions made in the company and also to make them feel integrated.

Moreover, it should be noted that this financial institution is also committed to gender equality between men and women as the company, since 2010 has an equality plan to realize its compromise with diversity and in this way work on the development of an egalitarian culture. For this, the company established the following objectives:

- *Equal opportunities*. Among this opportunities it is necessary to refer to the selection process and access to employment, training, professional development in equal opportunities, salary and company culture.

To face these objectives, the company ensures the absence of discrimination and is based on high standard objectives of gender and diversity while maintaining internal controls for achieve the highest level of objectivity and

focusing on the functions carried out, recognizing with this the merit and not aspects such as sex, ideology, nationality.... In addition, in the job offers the company uses an equal language and a development policy based on objective aspects is also carried out.

- *Conciliation of personal and professional life.* This refers to time flexibility, reductions in working hours, unpaid leave, exceedance, transfer of employees, and videoconferencing because with this, BBVA wants achieve a balance between personal and professional life. In 2005, the company signed an equal opportunity agreement and a conciliation between the labor and family life, becoming with this a leader in the sector.
- *Pregnancy and maternity protection.* This objective refers to the regulation of the different permits that women have such as, breastfeeding, job retention, holidays, maternity leave coverage...
- *Protocol for the prevention of sexual harassment and support of victims of gender violence.*

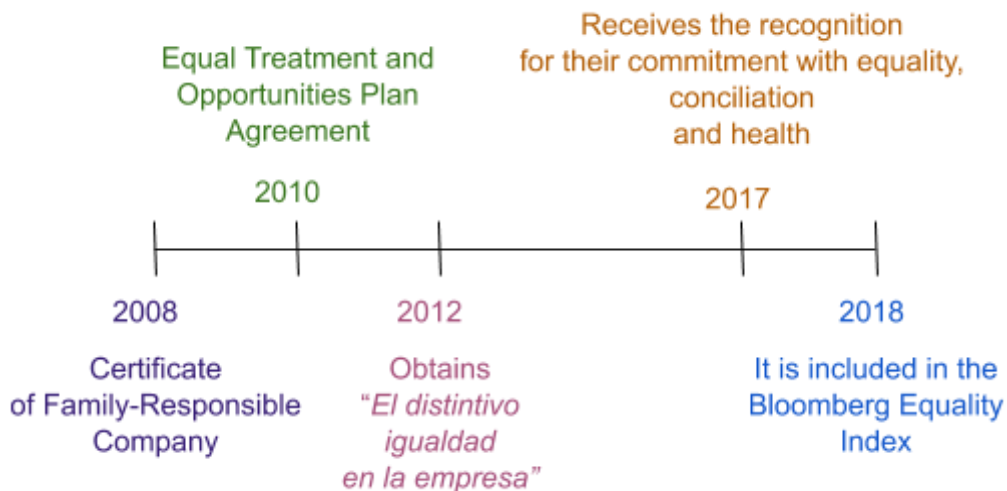
Despite this objectives, another purpose of the plan to promote the incorporation of women in positions of greater responsibility, was reduce in 4 years the gender gap that the company had. Consequently, other strategies that the company has carried out and which are still operational and adapting to the new environments are:

- The Rooney compromise. Which is based on present as candidates for positions of responsibility 50% of women staff.
- Follow with the training program “*Sesgos Inconscientes*” which is based on deleting from employees’ thoughts the stereotypes that can lead them to wrong decisions.
- Continue and improve with the initiative “[Woman@bbva.net](mailto:Woman@bbva.net)”

So, it should be highlighted that during the years of BBVA’s career, this financial entity has achieved, the Certificate of Family-Responsible company in 2008, “*El distintivo de igualdad de la empresa*” in 2012, then in 2017, the company received a recognition for

its commitment with equality, conciliation and health, and in 2018 was introduced to the Gender Equality Index of Bloomberg.

**Graphic 4.** BBVA's equality achievements



**Source:** self-production from the information of *Cinco días el país* ([https://cincodias.elpais.com/cincodias/2019/06/26/extras/1561566874\\_144134.html](https://cincodias.elpais.com/cincodias/2019/06/26/extras/1561566874_144134.html) 25/04/2020).

### **NH HOTEL GROUP**

NH is a hotel company that began its activity in 1978 with its first establishment in Pamplona. This company has become a reference for urban hotels in Europe and Latin America, with more than 350 hotels in 28 countries.



As for NH Hotel Group's vision is that the company becomes the consumer's choice, offering them memorable experiences by exceeding their expectations and making them feel special. Moreover, it is also intended turn the Group into the best choice for investors who wish to grow with the company, with a global and flexible proposition, with motivated teams who are proud of what they do.

This hotel group has a clear vocation for customer service and it is thanks to their corporate culture that they have differentiated themselves in the hotel sector. So, in the culture of NH Hotel it should be highlighted:

- The obsession to offer to the client memorable experiences.
- They are proud to serve others.
- They have the ambition to lead in the sector regardless of their size.
- Are responsible for their results.
- They take care of their employees and the employees take care of their customers.
- They are active in the communities where they are located.
- They have a young mind.
- Enjoy everything that they do.

Regarding to NH Hotel Group's involvement with women's leadership and gender equality, this company was the first international hotel chain to sign a national gender equality plan. In addition, the company has also created a Monitoring and Evaluation Committee made up by representatives of the company and of the trade unions which have signed. The objective of the committee is to interpret the content of the equality plan and to evaluate the degree of its implementation and of the objectives and actions established.

Thus, with the company's equality plan, the objective is ensure the effective and real equality of opportunities between the two genders within the company and avoid with this, any discrimination between them, both in access to employment, as well as in professional classification, promotion and training, in remuneration and in the conciliation of work and professional life.

In order to achieve the plan, it has been considered essential the commitment of the management and the involvement of the staff to improve the working environment, the optimization of the capacities of all employees and together with it improve the quality of life and increase the productivity. So, within the plan, it must be distinguished between the general and specific objectives.



### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- Integrate the equal treatment and opportunities between men and women in the company.
- Integrate the gender perspective in the management of the company.
- Make more easy the conciliation of personal, family and work life to the people who make up the company's staff.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. Keep and advance in a balanced composition of staff in terms of the presence of both genders in the different professional groups of the company, ensuring in the selection process an equal treatment and opportunities.
2. Candidatures will be evaluated with clear and objective aspects far from stereotypes and prejudices that could produce a gap in the selection process, focusing on reasons of merit, capacity and suitability for the position, instead of decisions based on sex, race, age, disability, religion...
3. Ensure equal opportunities for both genders and non-discrimination in promotions and job classification.
4. Promote the access of women to positions of responsibility, according to reasons of merit, capacity and suitability for the position, contributing to reduce inequalities and imbalances which, regardless of their origin could happen into the company.
5. Analyse the formation and its impact on the professional promotion of women, so that the formation plan acts on horizontal and vertical segregation.
6. Raise awareness and training in equal opportunities to the organization in general and especially to the staff related to the company's organization.

7. Provide the access of women and men to formative specialities different from those related to their job as a strategy that contributes to balance their presence in the feminized and masculinized categories.
8. Review the salary structure that the company has, ensuring its transparency, so that the remuneration concepts of the different groups and their respect for the principles of the plan can be known and verified.
9. Ensure the conciliation rights, giving information about them and making them accessible to all staff, regardless of gender, material status, seniority in the company or contractual modality.
10. Improve legal measures to facilitate the conciliation between the personal, family and working life.
11. Encourage the use of co-responsibility measures among the men of the staff.
12. Delete or reduce the occupational risks at source, from their job evaluation, adopting the necessary measures, both in the correction of the current situation and in the technical and organizational evolution of the company, to adapt the work to the person and protect his or her health.
13. Promote work conditions that avoid sexual harassment or for sex reasons.
14. Take care that the realization of the rights legally established in O.L. 1/2004 are ensured. This rights are for women victims of gender violence and with them the company want to contribute more to their protection.
15. Review, correct and monitor the language and the images used in communications for both internal and external use, in order to eliminate sexism.
16. Establish permanent information channels about the integration of equal opportunities in the company.

So, among the different actions that the company will be carried out to face these objectives, can find: all language, expressions and images that may be sexist or stereotypical will be eliminated. Moreover, specific awareness and formation actions on equal opportunities will also be implemented, and gender inequalities will be corrected to achieve an equal remuneration between men and women, among others.

To conclude, it should be highlighted that NH Hotel Group, with its equality plan and its actions carried out, has achieved in 2020 be included in the Gender Equality Index of Bloomberg, standing out for its gender pay equality policies and for its commitment and contribution to gender equality through the implementation of policies that help to make visible and improve the presence of women in the company.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The labour world has always been characterized by a very complex and changing world due to the number of situations and factors, which have been appearing and evolving constantly over time, and companies have always had to adapt to new situations in order to cope with the market and new opportunities. Among these variations, one of the most important is the introduction of women's activity in the labour world, which has had a great impact on companies and, above all, on society.

This fact has marked a before and after in the labour world because, women have always been associated with housework and with the care of their families, leaving them aside in the business world. Thus, overtime women have been introducing themselves and having access to new jobs but they have always had to face a lot of obstacles and differences from men in order to achieve this.

When we talk about women and work, we are talking about gender inequality as many women are in disadvantaged situations in their workplace as well as working under different conditions respect to men, giving this away to employment inequalities such as wages, the opportunity to promote into the company, sexual harassment...

So, to be able to cope with these difficulties faced by the female gender, it is necessary to consider personal, educational, political and social measures because society has generally been educated on masculinized terms and that is why women are considered

inferior in terms of work. If we start educating and teaching with equality, this masculinization will be ended and gender equality will be achieved. In addition, it should be noted another measure to face this, gender diversity, which is considered a useful, innovative and advantageous strategy for achieving the gender equality.

Consequently, to these positive developments regarding women and work activity, it should be added that currently many companies have also changed the way that they manage their business, and that is that they have put aside management to focus on leadership and in their different styles such as female leadership, transformational leadership, participatory leadership... These new styles are focused on the people of the team, leaving the achievement of objectives in second place and in addition, the participation of the employees in the decision making process is encouraged, working with empathy and motivating the workers, always with respect and trust.

Therefore, as mentioned, female leadership is one of the styles of the 21st century, which is characterized by its orientation towards people, by its cooperation, by promoting communication among team members, by being innovative and participatory, among other aspects, and it should be noted, that all these features are associated with the innate skills that women have by nature and that bring great advantages for current business.

For this reason, more and more companies such as Enagás, BBVA, L'Oréal, Danone, Inditex, NH Hotel Group, among others, are choosing female leadership to cope with the labour market and apply this style in their companies. This implementation means that companies are committed to gender equality within the organizations and that they implement equality plans to be able to face all the inequalities that exist and that may appear, thus giving way with this to a greater support to the female gender. So, with these actions, the company promotes the inclusion of women in the workplace and especially in positions of more responsibility within it.

To conclude, as has been seen, with both progress in society and in business, gender equality is getting closer and closer to being achieved, thus making it possible that women can access work without any impediment gender difference. In addition, it should be noted that with this, it is also getting closer to achieving that the high

hierarchical levels are lead by women being those who guide and lead the companies in the business world.

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